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UNCLAS LIMA 002642

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

INL FOR FARRAR, WHA FOR MONSERRATE. DEPARTMENT PASS TO NSC
FOR BARTON, ONDCP FOR GEDDINGS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [PE](#)

SUBJECT: SEIZURE OF MAJOR COCAINE HCL LABORATORY IN APURIMAC

1. (SBU) Summary: On June 9, 2005, PNP DIRANDRO Special Operations Group, aided by NAS helicopters, seized a major cocaine HCL laboratory on the River Ene in the VRAE. At the site, the Special Ops group found half a metric ton of cocaine hcl along with 1 metric ton of cocaine base, as well as 3 tons of precursor chemicals, several high caliber weapons, and sophisticated equipment to manufacture cocaine. Police estimate the laboratory complex had the capacity to produce 3 tons of cocaine hcl on a weekly basis. Later that evening, traffickers attempted to re-enter the laboratory, resulting in a fire fight with the police. No injuries resulted. The traffickers absconded, but the investigation continues with arrests anticipated. The PNP will hold a press conference in Lima June 10 to reveal this major seizure. Their investigation links Colombian traffickers to the operation of the laboratory. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Mid-day June 9, a NAS-supported DINANDRO Special Operations Group swooped in via helicopter on a cocaine laboratory near Puerto Ocopa, on the banks of the River Ene (VRAE). The PNP team found a compound with 4 security posts that covered an area of about 5 acres. It comprised 14 sound structures constructed of wood, with corrugated iron roofs covered by plastic and camouflaged by foliage to thwart detection from the air, all connected by walkways. The compound had a running water system with showers and flush toilets. Electricity was provided by a 60 KW generator, buried underground to muffle noise, capable of running a small township. Inside one lab facility the police found 500 kilos of cocaine HCL and in another 1,000 kilos of cocaine base. Three tons of essential chemicals were stored in plastic garbage-cans. Some large evaporator tanks, used to process acetone, apparently had been made on the site in one of the 2 welding shops. Twenty micro-wave ovens stood in rows along a shelf, along with other drying equipment used to process cocaine. The police estimated that the laboratory was capable of producing up to 3 tons of cocaine HCL a week.

3. (SBU) Weaponry left at the site included a Mini-14, 1 Gallil-type, an M-16, 22 rifles, a shotgun and a 38 Smith Wesson. Police also found detonators and explosives, and 7.6 ammunition for an AK-47.

4. (SBU) In the mess hall, the police found a half-eaten lunch spread out on a table, hurriedly abandoned at the arrival of the helicopters. The fully equipped kitchen had food supplies that could support 30 people for a month. Separate male and female sleeping quarters were in neat condition; on one bunk was a Spanish language magazine with Osama Bin Laden on the cover (the headline: "Islamic leader or Cruel terrorist?").

5. (SBU) After separating out the drugs, the police destroyed chemicals and moved to a base perimeter. During the late evening hours of June 9, traffickers attempted to re-enter the laboratory compound. A fire fight ensued with the police, who repelled the traffickers with no injuries.

6. (SBU) On June 10, the PNP will do a press briefing on the seizure of this significant laboratory. They have some investigative leads. Our police contacts have told us they hope to make some arrests shortly.

7. (SBU) Comment: The laboratory seized appears to be quite a significant operation in the major coca "source zone" of Peru. Various telltale indicators led police invest